

BESM

PRIMER

FOURTH EDITION

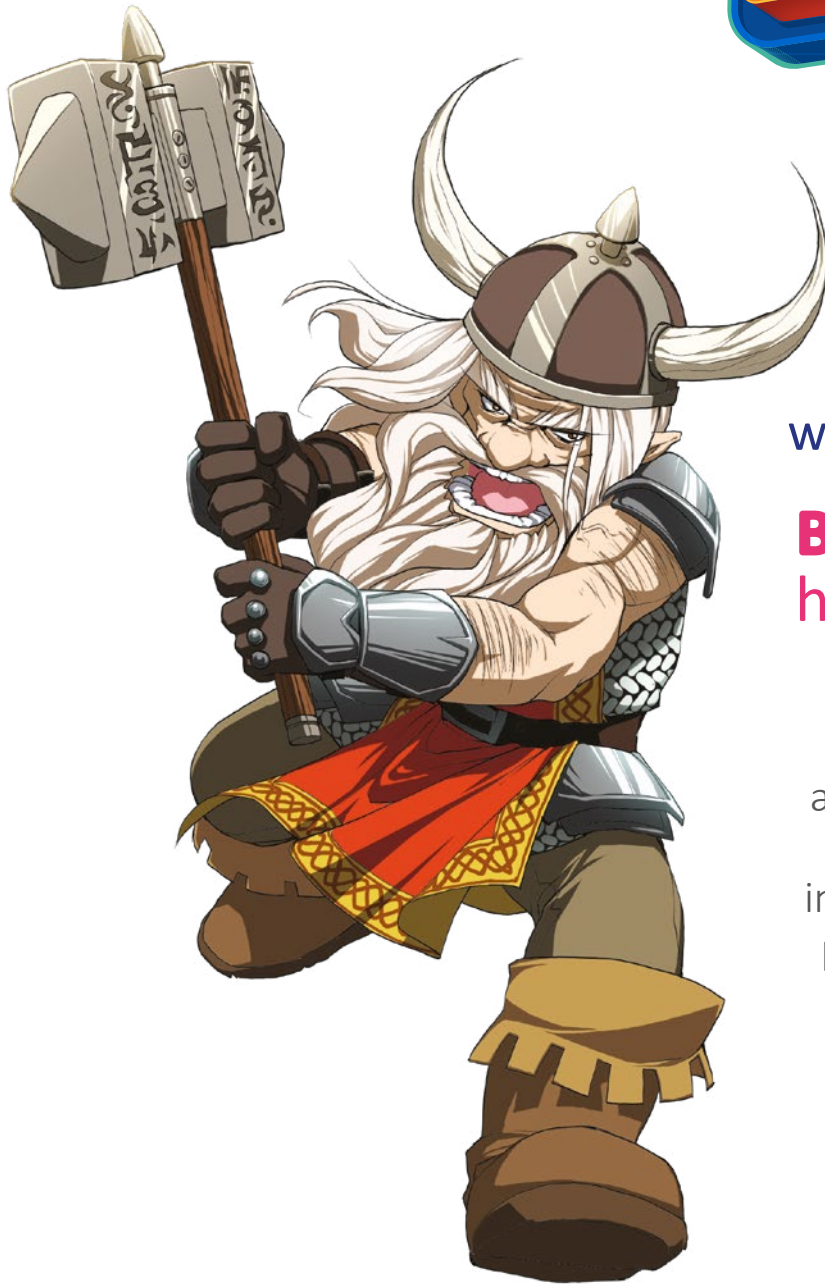


AN INTRODUCTION TO ANIME ROLE-PLAYING

BESM

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In the myriad realms of imagination, there are an infinite number of fascinating worlds waiting to be discovered

BESM FOURTH EDITION
helps you explore them all

Welcome to Big Eyes, Small Mouth – the multi-genre role-playing game for all your anime and manga adventures! This free fast play rules primer is your introduction to BESM's Tri-Stat System, providing you with a brief overview of what to expect from a BESM game.

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BESM and the Tri-Stat System Created and Written by Mark MacKinnon | Artwork by Niko Geyer
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DYSKAMI
Publishing Company



ISBN 978-1-989695-05-0



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INTRODUCTION

BIG EYES, SMALL MOUTH

In the myriad realms of imagination, there are an infinite number of fascinating worlds waiting to be discovered. BESM Fourth Edition helps you explore them all.

Welcome to Big Eyes, Small Mouth or BESM – the multi-genre role-playing game for all your anime and manga adventures! This Primer gives you a general overview of what you can expect from BESM Fourth Edition, including a walkthrough of the steps involved in creating a character. Additionally, we provide you with a comprehensive summary of BESM's underlying Tri-Stat System game mechanics so you can see how all the pieces fit together. Updated, rebalanced, streamlined, and expanded, BESM is now available in a standard Fourth Edition as well as a simpler, "stripped-down" Naked Edition.

ANIME GAMING

Watching anime movies or reading a manga series doesn't quite provide the immersive experience that some people crave. These inspired individuals don't just want to passively watch anime – they want to live it and experience it and be consumed by it. Even playing anime-themed video games doesn't provide the creative outlet whereby players can live the adventures of their favourite anime characters. An anime and manga role-playing game – just like the one you're reading – fills this dramatic need perfectly.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

For many people, a role-playing game (RPG) is the logical evolution of the games we used to play as children: "House," "Cops and Robbers," and even "Superheroes." A rule system assists in settling conflicts and resolving actions, often with the use of a random generator (dice, cards, etc.) to add an unpredictable element to the game. A game typically involves a handful of players (2-10) and one person to act as the game master (GM) or referee. The players tell the GM what their anime alter-egos would like to do, and the GM describes the results of their actions. The GM is also responsible for creating the plot and the setting for the game adventures and works closely with the players to keep the game interesting and fun for all.

In Big Eyes, Small Mouth (BESM), players assume the roles of anime or manga characters suitable to the time period and setting of the adventures the GM is staging. The Tri-Stat System game engine helps players assign some strengths and weaknesses to their characters using numbers to indicate relative ability and aptitude. The remaining elements of a character's background – family history, allies, knowledge, hobbies, aspirations, interests, beliefs, and more – are not covered by the game rules, but rather are described by each player according to their choice of character personality.

YOUR ROLE AS A PLAYER

As a player, you control your character's actions in the game. They can be likened to one of the major characters in an anime movie or series, working through the unexpected twists and turns of the plot with the help of other major characters (ie. personalities controlled by the other players). Your character's actions can greatly affect the outcome of the adventure, but you must keep in mind that every action has a consequence that could be revisited upon your character in a future game session. Role-playing is a group effort, and positive interactions between your character and those of the other players are vital to everyone's enjoyment of the game.

YOUR ROLE AS A GAME MASTER

As a GM, your contribution will be much greater than that from any one player. You must establish the genre, setting, conflicts, and plot of the adventure as well as all the non-player characters (NPCs) your group of players will meet during the game. Additionally, you must be able to project your imagination to the players by describing in vivid detail the world in which they live. Then, after all that, your game plot must remain sufficiently flexible to allow the characters' actions to make a definite impact on the adventure. A plot that is too rigid may leave players feeling their characters have lost the free will to affect their own destiny. Should you assume the role of GM, you must possess creativity, good judgement, and the ability to improvise in unexpected situations. It takes extra time and effort, but the reward of a well-played adventure is certainly worth it.

STRUCTURE OF A BESM GAME

Each role-playing adventure or episode will require one or two game sessions, each several hours in length. A number of episodes using the same characters can be linked together to form an anime campaign. Campaigns require more commitment from everyone involved, but watching the characters grow as the greater plot unfolds makes the extra effort worthwhile. The most engaging campaigns can last years or even decades, but keeping a campaign running for several months to a few years is a significant accomplishment given the busy schedules we find ourselves living.

CHARACTER BASICS

POWER LEVEL

After the GM and players together have outlined the general framework of your planned upcoming adventures, it's time to discuss your characters' power level. The characters' relative capabilities and aptitudes determines the Character Point total from which they are constructed. Consider which of the eight power rankings described herein best align with the vision your group created for your characters.

SUB-HUMAN (0-24 POINTS)

Role-playing underpowered characters can be a highly rewarding experience, with the game typically focusing more on drama and less on action. Such roles may include younger teens and children, wee creatures (such as pixies and sprites), or sentient small animals (like bunnies and squirrels).

HUMAN (25-49 POINTS)

This power level is suitable for games in which most of the characters will play brave but low-powered roles (such as those described above), with a few special abilities or powerful items to aid in their quests. It can also be used for games featuring normal humans like detectives, high school students, scientists, and soldiers.

ADVENTURER (50-74 POINTS)

The adventurer power level is suitable for games in which most of the characters are valiant and courageous but otherwise normal humans or near-humans. They may have some special abilities, but rarely exceed the power of a typical action movie hero. It is also suitable for games where the characters play low-powered characters (for example, elementary school students) who have some powerful abilities, such as pet monsters or the knowledge to cast magical spells.

HEROIC (75-99 POINTS)

BESM players may find this power level the "sweet spot" for a wide variety of adventures, since heroic characters have a decent selection of moderate abilities plus some nifty items and other resources. At the same time, the power level and Character Point totals aren't so high that they might cause power balance issues or difficulties presenting challenging adventures for every character in the group. Heroic characters may reflect humans at their peak performance with moderate special abilities, or capable non-human characters with significant technological or paranormal advantages.

MYTHICAL (100-149 POINTS)

The mythical power level is most suitable for games where the characters are notably more impressive than normal humans, but can still be challenged by ordinary opponents (especially in large numbers). The characters

may still be human but are typically exceptionally talented, such as a legendary martial arts master, the toughest cop in the city, or an elite secret agent. They could also be characters with significant supernatural or psychic powers, such as a magical girl or an experienced mage or psionic. Mythical level is ideally suited for individuals with moderately powerful racial abilities: a vampire, a ghost, a cyborg, a demon, etc. Finally, a mythical game can also cover characters that are above average in capabilities, but individually or collectively have access to very powerful gear. Example character types include a squad of giant robot mecha pilots or the captain and crew of a starship.

SUPERHUMAN (150-199 POINTS)

This power level enables the characters to possess abilities far beyond the norm. A "human" individual built at this power level will have legendary abilities – a contender for the title of the world's greatest thief or the world's best martial artist, for example. Alternatively, the character may have true superhuman abilities, such as an arch-mage sorcerer, a dragon, an elder vampire, a powerful psychic, an advanced combat android, or a magical girl that has fully awakened her abilities. A superhuman character could also be a competent but otherwise normal individual with a destiny and super powerful items such as a towering robot mecha or a mighty magical artefact.

SUPERPOWERED (200-249 POINTS)

Similar to superhuman power level, but the characters are so powerful that ordinary humans seem like ants underfoot. As with superhuman power, the character's abilities might come from paranormal powers, magic, racial abilities, or items ... or often a combination of all of them. Such amazing characters will not always be very experienced at wielding this power, however. Anime is full of ordinary teenagers who were granted the power of a demigod thanks to: suddenly inheriting an ultra-powerful mecha, awakening psychic powers, a scientific experiment gone awry, or some other twist of fate. How the characters handle these enhanced responsibilities – or spectacularly fail to handle them, with tragic results for all concerned – can be more important than the power itself.

GODLIKE (250+ POINTS)

With this challenging power level, the character's abilities are potentially forceful enough to single-handedly change the world (or even worlds). Players should be cautious about starting their adventures at this level of ability, since with great power comes great responsibility ... and also great complications. Nevertheless, godlike does reflect the power levels of some popular anime shows.

CHOOSE TEMPLATES

Templates are popular, ready-to-use archetypes you can assign to your character in BESM to speed up the character creation process. They are subdivided into three categories: Size Templates, Race Templates, and Class Templates.

Assigning Templates is optional if you prefer to build your character from scratch, but is recommended for novice players or players who are not familiar with the openness of a point-based creation systems like the one presented in BESM. You can create a character without using them by selecting Stats, Attributes, and Defects appropriate to your character vision and scope of the game's storyline. Even if none of BESM's Race or Class Templates fit the type of character you wish to design, all 50 of those entries presented in the game can serve as examples of how you and the Game Master can collaborate to create new Race and Class Templates.

To the right are two Template examples detailed in the BESM rules. Creating a Nekojin Demon Hunter uses a total of 50 Character Points (since $10 + 40 = 50$).



NEKOJIN

Size Rank 0: Medium

LEVEL	POINTS	ATTRIBUTE
2	2	Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes 2)
2	2	Features (Appearance: Cute, Low-Light Vision, Retractable Claws)
1	1	Heightened Senses (Hearing)
2	2	Mulligan
2	2	Special Movement (Cat-Like, Wall Bouncing)
1 (2)	2	Weapon: Claws (Non-Penetrating +1)
RANK	POINTS	DEFECT
1	-1	Easily Distracted (Things that Distract Cats)
10		TOTAL

DEMON HUNTER

VALUE	POINTS	STAT
1	2	Body Stat
LEVEL	POINTS	ATTRIBUTE
2	2	Attack Mastery
5	5	Combat Technique (Select 5)
3	3	Connected (Demon Hunting Group)
1	1	Defence Mastery
2	2	Heightened Awareness
1	1	Immutable
	10	Item (20 Points; Various Armour, Weapons, Equipment)
1 (2)	3	Massive Damage (Targetted: Demons +1)
2	2	Mind Shield
1	3	Skill Group (Adventuring)
1	3	Skill Group (Detective)
1	3	Skill Group (Military)
1	2	Skill Group (Street)
RANK	POINTS	DEFECT
1	-1	Easily Distracted (Demon Lore)
1	-1	Nightmares (Demon Attacks)
40		TOTAL

ASSIGN STATS

Stats (short for Statistics) are numerical assignments that reflect your character's basic capabilities, with higher Stat values indicating an advanced level of accomplishment or achievement. Stats provide the foundation upon which everything else is built. Dice rolls are compared to your Stats when you want your character to perform challenging tasks in BESM to help determine if their attempt was successful or not.

BESM uses three Stats to represent your character's abilities: Body, Mind, and Soul. You may use some or all of your remaining Character Points when assigning Stats to your character, and then add these values to any that were included in selected Race or Class Templates.

BODY STAT

The Body Stat measures the physical aspects of your character. This includes overall health, strength, endurance, quickness, rate of healing, manual dexterity, and ability to withstand damage and trauma. A character with a high Body is in good physical shape.

Body values of nonhumans or super-powered humans may still centre on a human average (unless they are also superhumanly fit). Superhuman or subhuman strength, durability, and speed are all represented by specific Attributes and Defects. For example, an out-of-shape giant might have a lower Body than an athletic teenage boy but the giant's size may be reflected by other Attributes such as Armour, Superstrength, and Tough.

MIND STAT

The Mind Stat represents your character's mental prowess and aptitude. High values indicate intelligent and witty characters who are keen critical thinkers and strategists. Your character's Mind value does not necessarily correlate with training and experience, though. Your character can be highly skilled in one or two specific areas, yet still have only an average Mind Stat.

SOUL STAT

The Soul Stat represents luck, willpower, spirit, and determination, and can also represent psychic ability, empathy, and unity with nature. A high Soul Stat helps your character focus their personal energies or life force to go beyond their normal limits and to fuel special abilities. High Soul values are a good way to represent the many anime heroes whose main trait is their strength of character, pure heart, or innocence.

STAT VALUES

Stat Value	Point Cost	Rank Description
1	2	Highly inept; infant
2	4	Significantly below adult human; child
3	6	Below adult human average; teenager
4	8	Adult human average
5	10	Above adult human average
6	12	Significantly above adult human average
7	14	Highly capable
8	16	Extremely capable
9	18	Best in the local region
10	20	Best in the country or large region
11	22	World-class ability
12	24	Maximum normal human potential
13+	28+	Special; only with GM permission

READING STAT VALUES

For most games, Stats range from 1 to 12. A value of 4 in a Stat is the adult human average. Ratings under 4 indicate decreasing competency and ratings over 4 designate increasing superiority. For example, a person of average build, high intelligence, and above average determination might have Body 4, Mind 7, and Soul 5.

STAT COSTS

Any Character Points remaining after you have assigned one or more Templates can be used to purchase Stats. How you decide to allocate your character's Stats are your choice. Stats start with a value of 0 and raising a Stat by one costs value 2 Character Points. Most characters should have values of at least 4 each in Stat if you want to represent a minimum of average human capabilities, though higher values are extremely common for most anime and manga characters.

You may wish to not spend all your Character Points assigning Stats, though, since any Points not spent on Stats and Templates can be used to acquire very useful and diverse Attributes for your character. Of course, the Game Master may choose to set an absolute ceiling or floor on the number of Character Points that can be allocated to Stats to ensure characters have a balance between Stats and Attributes – for example, no Stats lower than 3 nor higher than 10 – or they may leave this allocation decision to your discretion.

ATTRIBUTES

ADD ATTRIBUTES

The three Stats represent your character's baseline abilities. More specialised aspects of your character are known as Attributes, which can represent innate talents, learned skills, racial traits, magical spells, psychic abilities, superpowers, technological enhancements, and more. Attributes can also be added to equipment (known as Items) or entities (known as Companions) to create personal gear, artefacts, vehicles, and assistants.

The amount of flexibility and customisation provided by Attributes is immense. You will probably spend more time pouring over the Attribute options for your character than on any other stage of character creation. Take your time and communicate frequently with your Game Master if you have any questions about how specific Attributes will work in your upcoming game or if the GM has any suggestions to help guide your character development.

ATTRIBUTE LEVELS

Since you have already spent points to assign Stats and Templates to your character, you can now use your remaining Character Points to acquire Attributes. There are dozens of different Character Attributes, each representing a particular talent or special ability. Think carefully about the balance between a few high-Level Attributes and a large number of low-Level Attributes.

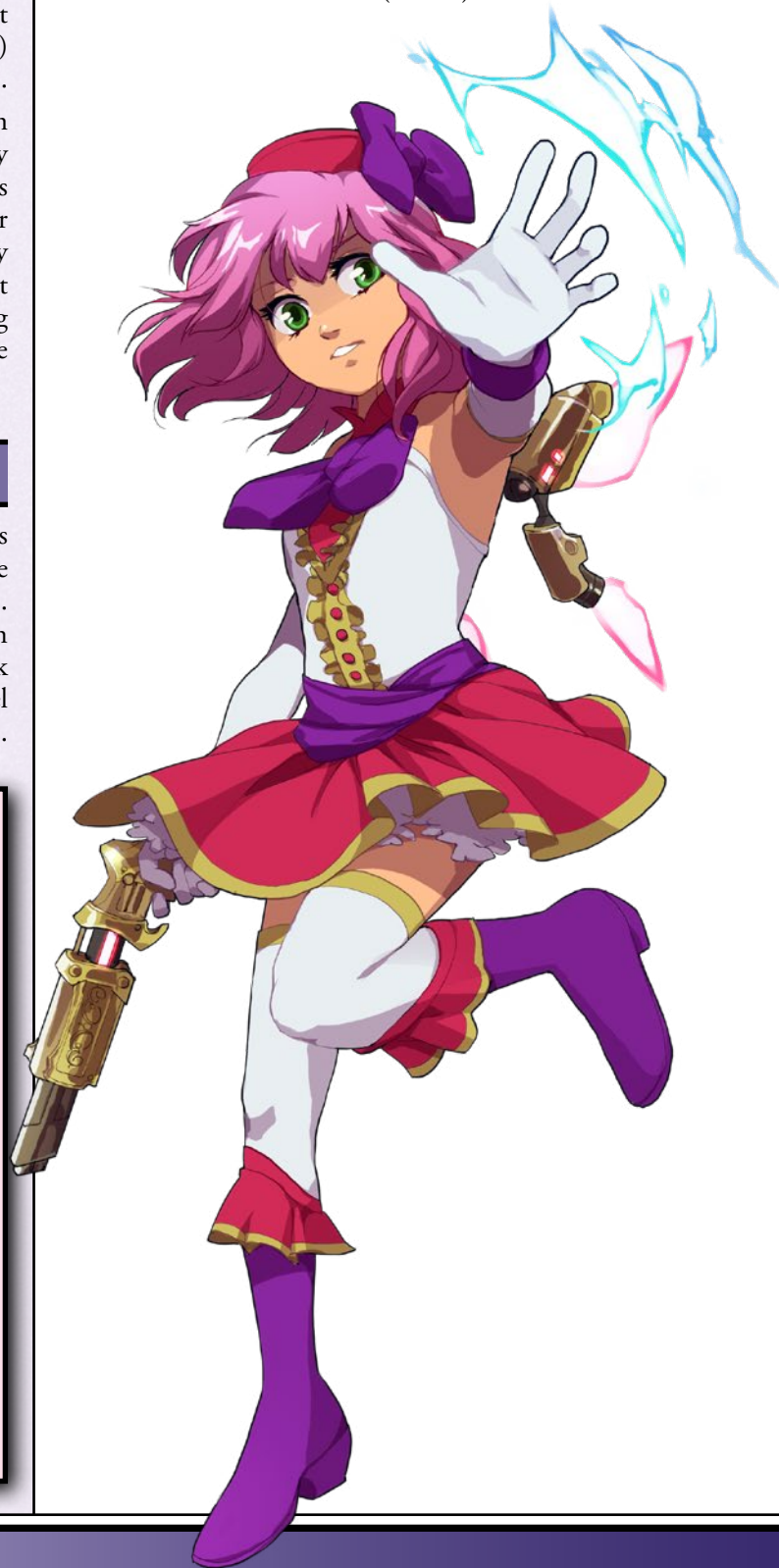
ATTRIBUTE LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Level	Game Effect Description
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | The Attribute has a minimal effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 2 | The Attribute has a minor effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 3 | The Attribute has a moderate effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 4 | The Attribute has a good effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 5 | The Attribute has a significant effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 6 | The Attribute has a major effect during adventures or impact on the character |
| 7+ | An extreme effect (and beyond) that requires Game Master permission |

Most Attributes are rated with a Level from 1 to 6, but with GM permission and a solid character concept, you can create your character with Attribute Levels beyond this threshold.

Attributes added to your character are combined with those gained through Templates. For example, the Demon Hunter Template includes 2 Level of the Mind Shield Attribute. If you now add an additional 3 Levels of Mind Shield to your character, their Mind Shield Attribute is raised to Level 5 (2+3=5).



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

Attribute Name	Level Cost	Summary of Attribute's Game Effect
Absorption	5	Absorb up to 5 damage/Level
Alternate Form	4	Create a secondary form built with up to 5 Points/Level
Alternate Identity	1	One alternate identity/Level
Armour	2	Armour Rating = 5/Level
Attack/Defence Mastery	1	+1 to Attack/Defence Combat Value
Capacity	1	Item can carry additional people or cargo - higher Levels means greater carrying capacity
Change State	3	Become a liquid, gaseous, incorporeal, or energy state (from lowest to highest levels)
Cognition	2	See the future (precognition) or past (postcognition) events – higher Levels increases time gap perceived
Combat Technique	1	One battle technique/Level
Companion	4	Companion is created from up to 10 Points/Level
Connected	1	Character has standing in an organisation's hierarchy – higher Levels mean greater position
Control Environment	1	Influence over one environment/Level
Conversion	3	For every 10 damage received, gain 1 temporary Character Point/Level
Data Access	2	Access and read computer data in the surrounding area – higher Levels mean larger area
Dimension Walk	5	Shift between adjacent dimensions – higher Levels means greater detail changes
Dynamic Powers	10	Control over a sphere of influence – higher Levels means greater control
Elasticity	1	Stretch and contort limbs and body – higher Levels means farther stretching
Enemy Attack/Defence	1	+2 to Attack/Defence Combat Value vs. specific enemy
Energised	1	+10 Energy Points/Level
Exorcism	1	Knowledge of exorcism rituals, with +2 Soul Stat roll bonus/Level
Extra Actions	4	+1 extra Action/Level each round
Extra Arms	1	Character has more than two arms and hands – higher Levels means more arms
Features	1	Character has minor secondary abilities – higher Levels means more features
Flight	3	Character can fly in an atmosphere – higher Levels means faster flying
Force Field	4	Armour Rating = 10/Level
Gear	1	Access to useful equipment – higher Levels means more equipment
Ground Speed	1	Item (not for characters) can move along the ground – higher Levels means faster movement
Healing	1	Restores 5 Health Point/Level to injured targets
Heightened Awareness	1	High degree of situational awareness, with +2 Stat roll bonus/Level
Heightened Senses	1	One enhanced sense/Level
Illusion	1	Create mental hallucinations for a target – higher Levels means larger illusions
Immunity	3	Immunity to adverse effects from one aspect – higher Levels means the immunity has a larger game role
Immutable	1	Protection against body alteration, with +2 Stat roll bonus/Level
Inspire	1	Provide inspiration to allies, with +1 Stat roll bonus/Level
Item	Half	Create a useful tool, vehicle, mecha, or weapon – Character Point cost is halved (Item doesn't have Levels)
Jumping	1	Character can jump far – higher Levels means greater distances
Massive Damage	3	+1 Damage Multiplier/Level
Melee Attack/Defence	1	+2 to Attack/Defence Combat Value using specific melee weapon or technique
Merge	4	Item can temporarily merge with others, with new form created from up to 10 Points/Level/Item merging
Metamorphosis	2	Character can change target into a new Race Template created from up to +/- 5 Points/Level
Mimic	2	Character can mimic one Attribute from a target, at a maximum Level equal to the Mimic Level
Mind Control	5	Character can mentally dominate and control a target – higher Levels means more control
Mind Shield	1	Protection against psychic intrusion, with +2 Stat roll bonus/Level
Minions	2	Character has minor flunkies allies – higher Levels means more minions
Mulligan	1	Re-roll dice up to 2 times/Level each game session
Nullify	5	Temporarily nullify effects of a target's Attributes, with maximum Levels nullified equal to Nullify Level
Plant Control	1	Control the growth and movement of plants in the surrounding area – higher Level means larger area
Pocket Dimension	1	Character has control over an extraplanar dimension – higher Levels means bigger dimension
Portal	2	Character can create portals to one specific defined dimension/Level
Power Flux	10	Control over a sphere of influence by reassigning up to 5 Character Points/Level in Attributes
Power Variation	4	Reassign Character Points amongst one Attribute/Level plus one
Projection	3	Create physical projections – higher Levels means larger projections
Ranged Attack/Defence	1	+2 to Attack/Defence Combat Value using specific ranged weapon or technique
Regeneration	5	Regenerate 5 Health Points or Energy Points/Level each round
Reincarnation	2	Character can return to life after death – higher Levels means shorter time needed for resurrection
Resilient	2	Character can survive without damage for short periods in one hostile environment/Level
Sensory Block	1	Partially block in the surrounding three-metre area one sense or technique/Level
Sixth Sense	1	One sixth sense/Level
Size Change	10	Either grow or shrink (select one) by up to 1 Size Rank/Level
Skill Group	1 / 2 / 3	+1 Skill roll bonus/Level attempting tasks in a specific Skill Group – higher costs for important skills
Spaceflight	1	Character can fly in a vacuum – higher Levels means faster spaceflight
Special Movement	1	One special form of movement/Level
Summon Creatures	2	Summon creatures from the surrounding area – higher Level means more creatures summoned
Supersense	1	Character has one sense that functions at superhuman acuity – higher Level means farther range
Superspeed	3	Character can move extremely quickly – higher Levels means faster movement
Superstrength	4	Character can lift massive objects with strength – higher Levels means objects of greater mass
Swarm	2	Character can transform into a swarm of small creatures – higher Levels means more numerous swarm
Telekinesis	4	Character can move objects with thought alone – higher Levels means objects of greater mass
Telepathy	3	Character can read thoughts and communicate mentally – higher Levels means more telepathic proficiency
Teleport	3	Character can transport themselves to other locations instantly – higher Levels means farther distances
Tough	1	+10 Health Points/Level
Transfer	3	Character can transfer use of their Attributes to a target, at maximum Levels equal to the Transfer Level
Transmute	3	Temporarily change an Item worth up to 5 Points/Level into something different
Tunnelling	1	Character can burrow and move through ground – higher Levels means faster movement
Unaffected	2	-2 dice roll penalty/Level to affect the character with a specific Attribute
Undetectable	2	Character cannot be detected by one sense or technique/Level
Water Speed	1	Character can move on and under water – higher Levels means faster movement
Wealth	3	Character has substantial financial resources – higher Levels means more wealth
Weapon	2	Weapon attack damage = 1/Weapon Level x Damage Multiplier + Attack Combat Value

CUSTOMISE ATTRIBUTES

As you design your character, you may find that some Attributes don't function exactly the way you envision them. Perhaps they're too limited in scope – not offering enough options or alternatives – or maybe they're too broad and need to be scaled back. Fortunately, BESM Attributes are easy to customise using Enhancements and Limiters to increase or decrease an Attribute's effect.

ENHANCEMENTS

Adding an Enhancement to an Attribute does not change its Character Point cost but it does decrease the effective functioning Level of the Attribute by 1 Level. For example, the Force Field Attribute costs 4 Points/Level and provides the character an Armour Rating of 10/Level. Adding the Force Field Attribute at Level 4 therefore costs 16 Points and provides a substantial 40 Armour Rating. If you add one assignment of the Area Enhancement to increase the Force Field size and protect allies as well, the Attribute still costs 16 Points (since it is still a Level 4 Attribute) but functions 1 Level lower due to the extra area advantage. Consequently, your Force Field now functions as though it was Level 3 that protects your character and nearby allies with a 30 Armour Rating. Enhancements cannot be added if the effective Level of the Attribute would drop below Level 1.

LIMITERS

Conversely, adding a Limiter to an Attribute increases its effective functioning Level by 1 Level. For example, a Level 1 Force Field costs 4 Points and provides a 10 Armour Rating. If you add one assignment of the Activation Limiter (requires one round to activate) and two assignments of the Environmental Limiter (only functions in water), the Attribute still costs 4 Points (since it is still a Level 1 Attribute) but functions at 3 Levels higher as though it was a Level 4 Attribute that provides a 40 Armour Rating – three Limiter assignments increases the effective Level by +3 Levels.

Limiters are typically only available up to three assignments each, with increasing severity for each one.

LEVEL DESIGNATIONS

When reading a Template or character entry, an effective Level of an Attribute may be provided in parentheses after the actual assigned Attribute Level if it has Enhancements and Limiters. For example, the Nekojin Race Template lists their Weapon Attribute Level as "1 (2)", which means the actual Attribute Level is 1 (and costs 2 Points), but the effective Level is 2 (to account for single assignment of the Non-Penetrating Limiter that's specific to their Weapon).

ENHANCEMENTS

Name	Effect of Each Assignment
Area	Increases the area of the Attribute's radius of influence
Duration	Increases the amount of time the Attribute is in effect
Potent	Provides enhanced bonuses to dice rolls when using the Attribute
Range	Increases the distance away from the character the Attribute can activate
Targets	Increases the number of targets the Attribute effects
Unique	The Attribute (especially Weapon) gains an enhanced effect

LIMITERS

Name	Effect on the Attribute
Activation	Takes preparation time before use
Assisted	Needs assistants to use
Backlash	Negative effect on failed dice rolls
Charges	Limited uses each day
Concentration	Requires concentration to use
Consumable	Destroys a physical focus when used
Delay	Takes time before it is effective
Dependent	Must use other Attributes concurrently
Deplete	Expend Energy Points to use
Detectable	Specific techniques can detect use
Emotional	Requires emotional investment to use
Environmental	Works in specific environments only
Equipment	Requires equipment to use
Imbue	Only others can use Attribute
Irreversible	Difficult to revert once Attribute is used
Localised	Only part of body is affected
Maximum	Attribute only functions at max power
Object	Only Item benefits from Attribute
Permanent	Attribute functions constantly
Recovery	Character must rest after use
Semi-Permanent	Expend Energy to turn off Attribute
Unique	Restrictions are imposed on Attribute
Unpredictable	Attribute need dice roll to function

SELECT DEFECTS

Defects are disadvantages through which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life. Defects serve as an excellent (and sometimes comical) role-playing opportunity and offer interesting plot hooks for your GM to use during adventures. They should only impede your character to a limited extent, though, and are not intended to totally negate their many abilities. If assigned to Items, Defects indicate built-in flaws or drawbacks that make it more difficult to use or render it less effective than ideal.

DEFECT RANKS

Defects have a negative Point cost that give back Character Points to your character, depending on how severely the Defect will impact their life. The more Points returned, the greater the hindrance to the character. It's easy to think of Defects as negative Attribute Levels that hinder rather than help the character.

Defects are therefore categorised into three groups, depending on how much they reduce the final Point cost of the character:

Lesser – Reduces the final cost by 1 Point/Rank

Greater – Reduces the final cost by 2 Points/Rank

Serious – Reduces the final cost by 3 Points/Rank

UNUSED POINTS

If after assigning a few Defects your character's total Character Point cost is now less than the number of Character Points you were assigned by the Game Master, you have three options:

INCREASE YOUR BENEFITS

You can return to previous character creation steps and assign additional Stats, Templates, or Attributes, which increases your Character Point cost up to your correct starting total.

ADD UNKNOWN ELEMENTS

You can assign the unused Points to an "Unknown Power" Attribute, which allows the GM to assign hidden abilities to your character that are appropriate for their role in the game's storyline. The hidden ability will be revealed at an appropriately dramatic time as your game adventures progress from session to session.

BANK FOR THE FUTURE

You can save the unused Character Points for future consideration and allocate them at an appropriate time.

DEFECTS

Name	Points	Negative Impact
Achilles Heel	-2/-4/-6	Weak to an attack form
Awkward Size	Special	For large Items only
Bane	-2/-4/-6	Object causes damage
Blind Fury	-2/-4/-6	Enraged emotional state
Conditional Ownership	-1/-2/-3	Someone other than the character owns the Item
Confined	-3/-6/-9	Travel limited to an area
Cursed	-2/-4/-6	Suffers from a curse
Easily Distracted	-1/-2/-3	Easily distracted by a trigger object or event
Fragile	-1/-2/-3	-10 Health Points/Rank
Hounded	-2/-4/-6	Constant attention
Impaired Manipulation	-3/-6/-9	Character has limited ability to hold objects
Impaired Speech	-3/-6/-9	Character's speech is impeded in some way
Inept Attack	-1/-2/-3	-1 Attack Value/Rank
Inept Defence	-1/-2/-3	-1 Defence Value/Rank
Involuntary Change	-1/-2/-3	Trigger changes character into alternate form
Ism	-2/-4/-6	Suffers discrimination
Magnet	-1/-2/-3	Attracts throngs of fans
Marked	-1/-2/-3	Distinctive body marks
Nemesis	-1/-2/-3	Enemy who interferes
Nightmares	-1/-2/-3	Plagued by bad dreams
Obligated	-2/-4/-6	Must follow directions
Phobia	-1/-2/-3	Fear of object or event
Physical Impairment	-3/-6/-9	A physical disadvantage impedes the character
Red Tape	-1/-2/-3	Must follow rules
Reduced Damage	-3/-6/-9	Damage Multiplier is decreased by 1/Rank
Sensory Impairment	-3/-6/-9	A character's sense is either diminished or lost
Shortcoming	-1/-2/-3	Reduced Stat abilities
Significant Other	-1/-2/-3	Character's loved one may be placed in danger
Skeleton in the Closet	-2/-4/-6	Negative impact if a secret ever comes out
Social Fault	-1/-2/-3	Socially awkward trait
Special Requirement	-3/-6/-9	A requirement must be obtained to function
Unappealing	-1/-2/-3	Distinct appearance
Unique Defect	Special	An original Defect
Vulnerability	-2/-4/-6	Exposure blocks Attributes
Wanted	-2/-4/-6	Reward for character
Weak Point	-2/-4/-6	Extra damage in one area

DERIVED VALUES

CALCULATE DERIVED VALUES

The end of your character creation journey is nearly here! Once you have allocated all the Character Points by acquiring Stats, Attributes, and Defects – plus any associated Enhancements and Limiters – it's time to calculate your character's Derived Values. These derived numbers are based directly on your character's Body, Mind, and Soul Stats (modified by Attributes and Defects) and thus do not afford any choices of Character Point distribution. If your Derived Values don't reflect the vision for your character accurately – such as a berserker barbarian character that has a too-low Attack Combat Value and too-high Defence Combat Value – you can always return to the Stats, Attributes, and Defects chapters to refine your assignments to better match your expectations.

COMBAT VALUE

Combat Value governs all facets of physical conflict, including your character's abilities in attacking, defending, and delivering damage. A higher Combat Value reflects fighting spirit and an increased knowledge of all physical combat forms: armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons. There are two separate components of the Combat Value – Attack Combat Value (ACV) and Defence Combat Value (DCV). Attributes and Defects may modify these separately.

In BESM, prowess in combat can only be achieved through harmony of the Complete Self. Lack of self-unity through weakness of any facet of the character will restrict their ability in combat. Consequently, the Body, Mind, and Soul Stats are all of equal importance to the combat master: Body Stat for a forceful attack and defence; Mind Stat for quick wit, knowledge of combat techniques and anticipation of an opponent's actions; and Soul Stat for the winning spirit and good fortune. For example, a petite character with martial arts training can take down an opponent nearly twice their size since knowledge and determination is just as important as brute force.

Your character's base Combat Value is calculated by adding together all the Stat Values and divide by three, rounding down.

$$\text{COMBAT VALUE} = \left(\text{BODY STAT} + \text{MIND STAT} + \text{SOUL STAT} \right) \div 3$$

HEALTH POINTS

Health Points measure the amount of physical damage your character's body can sustain before it ceases to function (i.e. your character is knocked unconscious or even dies). Damage delivered in combat is subtracted from your character's current Health Point total. If the total ever falls below zero, the character is rendered unconscious and may die without medical attention.

$$\text{HEALTH POINTS} = \left(\text{BODY STAT} + \text{SOUL STAT} \right) \times 5$$

ENERGY POINTS

Characters possess a personal reserve of energy that may be burned when carrying out difficult tasks. Energy Points are needed to fuel Attributes that are associated with the Deplete Limiter. If your character's Energy Point total is ever reduced to 0, they will fall unconscious from exhaustion.

Energy Points are also used to represent deprivation such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, lack of sleep, and even intense emotion such as crippling fear or stress. In some instances (such as hunger and thirst), if a character's Energy Points are at 0 and continue to decline, they will begin to lose Health Points instead.

$$\text{ENERGY POINTS} = \left(\text{MIND STAT} + \text{SOUL STAT} \right) \times 5$$

DAMAGE MULTIPLIER

A character's base Damage Multiplier is normally 5. It can be increased by +1 per Level of the character's Massive Damage Attribute, or similarly decreased by the Reduced Damage Defect.

More information about the Damage Multiplier is revealed later in the combat and damage section.

FINISHING UP

Once you have calculated your character's Derived Values, you should show your creation to the GM since they may have a few suggestions for fine-tuning your character to better fit the game storyline. Otherwise, your have finished the creative process and your character is ready for play!

TAKING ACTION

In a role-playing game like BESM, most character or NPC actions do not require any particular rules. A player simply states that their character walks across a room, picks up an object, drives a vehicle, talks to someone, etc., and if the GM agrees that the action is possible and can be performed without much difficulty, this simply happens. Personal interaction between characters or NPCs is at the heart of role-playing games and this is what sets them apart from other tabletop games such as board, miniature, and party games.

Throughout the course of a game, circumstances may arise where specific rules can help determine what happens. This is usually the case when the outcome of an action or event is uncertain and the result is important to the story.

A character's Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Derived Values help resolve these dramatic questions. In many cases, dice rolls can add additional hazard and drama to the action. The dice rolls represent elements beyond the direct control of the character or the uncertainty that results when opposing characters interact.

One situation the rules cover in greater detail is combat. The game mechanics for physical conflict are explicit to give players greater control over their characters' actions when engaged in a mortal struggle.

DICE ROLLS

BESM uses two standard six-sided dice, or 2d6, during game play. By adding the two numbers shown on the dice, values between 2 and 12 are generated, with the middle value of 7 generated most frequently.

Rolls determine the success or failure of important actions performed by the player characters or by NPCs interacting with them. Rolls are only needed for actions where the character's success is uncertain. The GM can decide that an action succeeds or fails without a roll, and many routine or minor actions should be resolved this way.

When a dice roll is required, the player rolls two dice and adds the relevant Stat, Combat Value, or Attribute Level modifier to the number rolled. The resulting sum is called the "total roll." The higher the total roll, the better the character's attempt. The total roll is compared to either a Target Number or opposed roll to determine if the task was successful.



TARGET NUMBERS

Difficulty	Target Number	Interpretation
Simple	6	Almost everyone will succeed
Easy	9	Characters will very rarely fail
Average	12	Success often requires some talent or training
Difficult	15	Success often requires above-average ability
Challenging	18	Success often requires significant ability
Unlikely	21	Success requires exceptional ability
Improbable	24	Success requires unparalleled ability

TARGET NUMBERS

The success of most non-combat rolls is determined by comparing them to a Target Number or TN (see table above), since those tasks are usually not opposed by any other characters. The GM assigns the task under consideration a Target Number before the roll is made. If the total roll is equal or higher than the Target Number, the task succeeds. If it was lower, it fails.

GMs should assign Target Numbers based on how easy or difficult the task is to perform. When in doubt, assign an average difficult Target Number of 12.

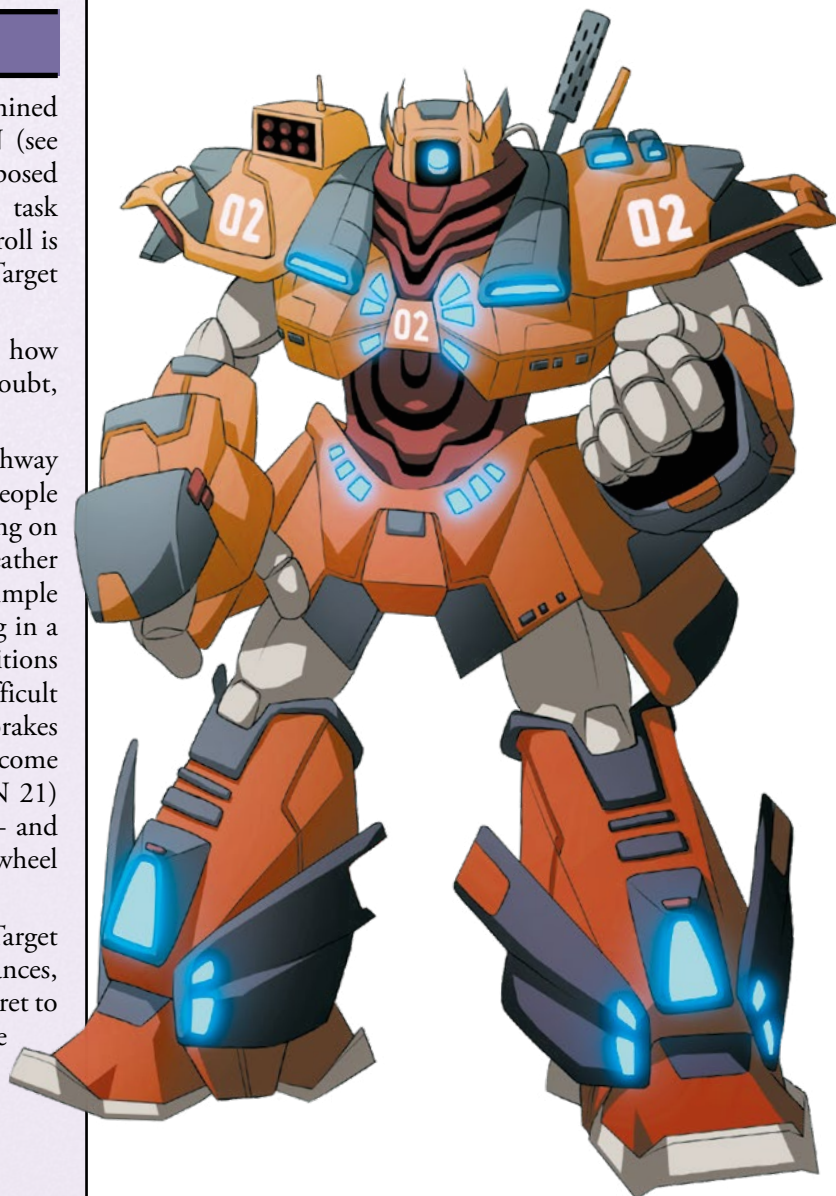
For example, driving a car along a busy highway would not normally require any dice rolls for most people in a modern setting, since driving is routine. Driving on the highway at high speeds during inclement weather might require a dice roll, though ... probably a Simple task (TN 6) or an Easy task (TN 9). Racing along in a complex construction zone in ideal weather conditions is perhaps an Average task (TN 12) or perhaps a Difficult task (TN 15) in inclement weather. If the car's brakes no longer work, racing along the highway may become a Challenging task (TN 18) or Unlikely task (TN 21) instead. Attempting to do so while blindfolded – and merely using the sound of the traffic to guide the wheel – is an Improbable task (TN 24).

The GM usually tells the player the task's Target Number before the player rolls. In some instances, though, the GM can keep the Target Number a secret to create dramatic tension and only reveal it after the character's total roll resulted in success or failure.

OPPOSED ROLLS

Instead of setting a specific Target Number, the Game Master may decide that a particular task requires an opposed roll. This is appropriate for any situation that involves a direct competition between opponents, such as arm wrestling, a game of chess, an interrogation, or combat.

In an opposed roll situation, the two (or more) characters involved each roll their own dice. The character with the higher total roll (for example, a dice roll + Stat + Skill Group) succeeds. If the result is a tie, the active character (such as the attacker in combat or the challenger in a game of chess) wins over the reacting character. If both characters can reasonably be considered active and a tied result is reasonable – such as in a running or car race – the contest is a draw; otherwise, re-roll to break the tie.



ROLL TYPES

There are five types of dice rolls used during game play: a Stat roll, a Skill roll, an Initiative roll, an attack roll, and a defence roll. Each of these rolls test a particular facet of a character's abilities. When a player announces the intended actions of their character, the GM must decide if a dice roll is necessary. Should a roll be required, the GM chooses which type of roll is most appropriate, based on these guidelines.

STAT ROLLS

A Stat roll is used when the GM believes that innate ability is more important than any learned expertise or combat capability in resolving the success of a particular action. An example of a Stat roll would be a Body Stat roll to force open a locked door using brute strength. Another important use for Stat rolls is to see if a character can resist the effects of something bad, such as mind control, poison, or shock.

The success of a Stat rolls is determined by rolling two dice and adding the relevant Stat and any situational modifiers. The result is the total roll. This is compared to either the Target Number or to an opposed roll to determine if the task was successful.

SKILL ROLLS

A Skill roll is similar to a Stat roll, except it is used when the task is one that the GM decides would be governed by both a Stat and a particular Skill Group Attribute, such as Academic, Technical, or Military.

If a task requires general intellectual ability (such as remembering the name of a person), the character normally makes a simple Mind Stat roll. Deciphering a scroll written in a rare alien language would also require a Mind Stat roll, but this task falls under the Academic Skill Group (an "Academic Skill Roll"). For such Skill rolls, add both the appropriate Stat and the Skill Group Level to the dice roll to determine the total roll.

INITIATIVE ROLLS

Initiative rolls are a special type of roll made by participants at the start of a combat scene to determine the order in which they will act. Each participant in the battle makes an Initiative roll using the sum of two dice plus their Attack Combat Value (after modification by specific Attributes and Defects). Initiative rolls determine the Initiative order, from the highest to the lowest total roll.

EDGES & OBSTACLES

Although most dice rolls involve simply rolling two six-sided dice as described earlier, situations may arise that result in the player rolling additional dice.

Sometimes an Attribute, Enhancement, Limiter, or Defect can provide a change to your character's dice rolls known as edges and obstacles. These modifiers shift the probability distribution of the dice rolls away from a symmetrical triangular distribution (7 in the middle) to an asymmetrical skewed curve.

MINOR EDGES AND OBSTACLES

When a minor edge or obstacle is applied to a roll, you roll three dice instead of just the normal two dice. You add together the two highest numbers for a minor edge (discarding the lowest roll), or two lowest numbers for a minor obstacle (discarding the highest roll). For example, if you roll three dice that come up as a 1, 3, and 6, the final roll result for a minor edge would be 9 (3+6) and for a minor obstacle would be 4 (1+3).

MAJOR EDGES AND OBSTACLES

When a major edge or obstacle is applied to a roll, you roll four dice instead of just the normal two dice. You add together the two highest numbers for a major edge (discarding the lowest two rolls), or two lowest numbers for a major obstacle (discarding the two highest rolls). For example, if you roll four dice that come up as a 2, 2, 3, and 5, the final roll result for a major edge would be 8 (3+5) and for a major obstacle would be 4 (2+2).

MODIFYING THE DIFFICULTY

The GM can also apply edges and obstacles to character rolls when situationally and dramatically appropriate to increase or decrease the difficulty of an action. For example, a character attempting an emergency appendectomy (a Challenging task with TN 18) might receive a minor edge to their Skill roll under ideal conditions, such as being walked through the procedure by an expert surgeon.

HEDGING ROLLS

At the GM's discretion, a player may eliminate the random element of a dice roll for their character by assuming an automatic result of 7 instead of rolling the dice (known as "hedging"). A character can use hedging on any roll if the GM permits, including Stat, Skill, Initiative, attack, and defence rolls.

The hedging value of 7 is increased to 8 for a minor edge and 9 for a major edge, or decreased to 6 for a minor obstacle and 5 for a major obstacle.

COMBAT IN BESM

Conflict is an essential component of nearly all role-playing games. Physical conflict, or combat, is an important element of BESM – but important need not be the same as frequent. Combat should be a vital element of a scene and not just a distraction that the GM uses to pass the time. The combat rules created for BESM were designed to mimic the dynamic and fast-paced battles of anime and manga adventures. Whenever a character enters physical conflict with another character or NPC, combat begins.

ATTACK ACTIONS

An attack is an attempt to strike a target, either physically or with an ability of some sort. It can also be used for similar non-violent actions that involve hitting a target, such as passing a ball to a sports teammate or serving in a tennis match.

ATTACK ROLL

An attack roll is used to resolve the success of an attack action in combat, such as an attempt to strike a blow or fire a weapon at an opponent. The attacking character rolls two dice and adds their Attack Combat Value to the result. The Enemy Attack, Melee Attack, and Ranged Attack Attributes may increase their Attack Combat Value when appropriate. The attacker's total roll is equal to the sum of the dice roll, Attack Combat Value, and appropriate Attribute modifiers.

Before rolling the dice, the player should clearly describe the method of attack, the weapon their character uses (if any), and the target. If the character is trying something unusual, they should specify this beforehand.

An attack roll is normally an opposed roll. The target gets a defence roll, representing their ability to dodge, block, or parry the attack. If the attacker's total roll equals or exceeds the target's defence roll, the attack is successful and damage is usually applied. If not, the character has missed the target or simply does not hit with sufficient force or accuracy to inflict damage. In this instance, the attacker's action is over, and the attack has no effect – though a miss with a ranged weapon may cause collateral damage if the shot strikes somewhere else instead (GM discretion) or if it has the Area Enhancement.

GENERAL ACTIONS

Rather than taking an attack action during a combat round, a character may instead use a general action on their Initiative. Such actions include using an Attribute, untying a rescued captive, running, changing weapons, climbing into or out of a vehicle, writing a note, changing clothes, etc. Players may also use general actions to run away or safely withdraw from armed or melee combat, provided the opposition does not attack at a later Initiative number in the same round (if this does happen, the withdraw fails).

A general action may succeed automatically or the GM can require a Stat roll or Skill roll to determine whether it succeeds. Some general actions may require several rounds to perform at the GM's option.

FREE ACTIONS

Some activities do not count as attack or general actions. A character can perform all of the following activities in addition to an action:

- » Move a short distance or manoeuvre their vehicle.
- » Say anything that fits within the span of only a few seconds.
- » Make defence rolls in response to any attacks against them.

DEFENCE

Defence is not an action but a reaction – it is an attempt to avoid being hit by an attack and includes dodging, parrying, diving for cover, and similar defensive manoeuvres.

DEFENCE ROLL

If a character is the target of an attack, they may immediately attempt to defend against it. Defences are not dependent on Initiative order but resolved as the attack roll is made. It is always an opposed roll against an attack roll. The defending character rolls two dice and adds their Defence Combat Value to the result. The Enemy Defence, Melee Defence, and Ranged Defence Attributes may increase their Defence Combat Value when appropriate. The defender's total roll is equal to the sum of the dice roll, Defence Combat Value, and any modifiers. If the defence roll exceeds the attack roll, the attack was successfully dodged, blocked, or parried. Each character can attempt only one defence against a particular attack, though a character may defend against more than one attack in each round.

DAMAGE

Successful attacks, accidents, and other hazards can all inflict damage, which measures the degree of physical injury inflicted by blows, burns, broken bones, lacerations, toxins, penetrations, and other physical trauma. Damage is subtracted from the Health Points of the victim.

WEAPON DAMAGE

The Weapon Attribute is used to define most Attacks that are innate to the character (such as spells, ki powers, or fiery breath) or which are built into Items (like swords or guns).

If a character successfully attacks using a Weapon Attribute, multiply the Weapon Attribute's Level by the character's Damage Multiplier and add it to their Attack Combat Value to determine the damage inflicted. This Attack Combat Value includes bonuses from the Attack Mastery, Enemy Attack, Melee Attack, and Ranged Attack Attributes, when appropriate.

$\text{Damage} = \text{Weapon Attribute} \times \text{Damage Multiplier} + \text{Attack Combat Value}$

UNARMED DAMAGE

An unarmed person can strike an opponent using fists, feet, head, etc. This is a free Weapon Attribute that all characters automatically have. Such attacks are considered a Level 0 Weapon and consequently, the damage inflicted upon a successful unarmed attack is simply equal to the character's Attack Combat Value.

$\text{Damage} = \text{Attack Combat Value}$

ARMOUR RATINGS AND DAMAGE

The Armour and Force Field Attributes can protect against injury by reducing the damage sustained by the Attribute's Armour Rating. If this reduces the damage to 0 or lower, no harm comes to the target.

DAMAGE AND HEALTH POINTS

If the target has no Armour Rating (or if some damage penetrates after subtracting the target's Armour Rating), reduce the target's current Health Point total by the amount of excess damage. Damage is applied in a similar way to both characters and Items.

If a character's current Health Points ever drop to zero or lower, the target is immediately knocked out or killed, depending on the tone of the game.

RECOVERY

A character who suffers lost Health Points due to damage may heal naturally (or be repaired, if the character is technologically augmented).

RECOVERING HEALTH POINTS

Health Points regenerate at a rate equal to the character's Body Stat for each day of rest. The healing rate doubles if the character is in the care of someone with an appropriate medical Skill Group, but halved if they do not spend time resting.

RECOVERING STUN DAMAGE

Health Points lost as a result of a weapon that stuns the character instead of inflicting regular damage recover at a rate equal to the character's Body Stat every hour.

REPAIRING EQUIPMENT

Items, such as weapons, vehicles, or other gadgets can become damaged in the course of adventures. Characters can repair damage to equipment by making an appropriate Skill roll. Each Skill roll should take approximately one day of work.

ENERGY POINTS

Energy Points represent a character's reserve of personal stamina, luck, and spiritual power. They are used to power Attributes that have the Deplete Limiter and may be drained as a result of special attacks simply or general fatigue.

FATIGUE

The GM may rule that a character will lose Energy Points if they are travelling or working without taking any time to rest. As a guideline, every 5-10 minutes of hard work or tiring travel (jogging, swimming, etc.) can result in a loss of one Energy Point.

OUT OF ENERGY

If a character's Energy Point total is ever reduced below zero, they will collapse due to exhaustion until their Energy Points are sufficiently recovered.

RECOVERING ENERGY POINTS

The average of the Mind and Soul Stats (rounded up) equals the number of Energy Points that the character recovers every hour with rest.